

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1628

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: AZAD KASHMIR COUNCIL MEETS

1. SUMMARY: CONVOKING OF THE JOINT PAK-AK COUNCIL IN ISLAMABAD AUGUST 18 WAS FURTHER STEP IN GOP'S STRATEGY TO BRING AK MORE FULLY INTO POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MAINSTREAM OF PAKISTAN. FORMATION OF COUNCIL IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF EXPANDING POLITICAL NEXUS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AK WHICH IS COMING TO REPLACE LONGSTANDING BUREAUCRATIC TIE. IT IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF MOVES INDICATING THE WILLINGNESS OF THE GOP TACITLY TO ACCEPT THE PRESENT DAY REALITIES OF THE KASHMIR DIVISION, HOWEVER MUCH IT MAY CONTINUE TO STRESS THAT ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT MUST BE ON THE BASIS OF SELF-DETERMINATION. FEDERAL MINISTER PIRZADA WILL EVIDENTLY PLAY KEY ROLE IN THE WORKINGS OF THE COUNCIL. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 18 THE FIRST SESSION OF AZAD KASHMIR COUNCIL WAS HELD IN SENATE HALL IN ISLAMABAD. THE COUNCIL, ESTABLISHED UNDER THE PROVISIONAL AZAD KASHMIR

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CONSTITUTION OF AUGUST, 1974 HAS WIDE MANDATE INCLUDING

INTER ALIA, DETERMINING WHICH PAKISTAN LAWS SHOULD BE APPLIED TO THE AREA. IT IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR LONG LIST OF ACTIVITIES - RANGING FROM COMMUNICATIONS TO REFUGEE AFFAIRS - IN AZAD KASHMIR. IT REPORTEDLY WILL HAVE A "LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE" FUNCTION BUT HOW IT WILL OPERATE IN PRACTICE AND HOW EXTENSIVE ITS POWERS WILL BE REMAIN TO BE SEEN. THE CONVOKING OF THE COUNCIL WAS NEXT STEP IN NEW FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNING AZAD KASHMIR FOLLOWING PROMULGATION OF PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION, ELECTION FOR AZAD KASHMIR ASSEMBLY, AND FORMATION OF PEOPLE'S PARTY GOVERNMENT IN STATE, ALL PART OF THE GOP'S OVERALL STRATEGY TO BRING AK MORE FULLY INTO THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MAINSTREAM OF PAKISTAN.

3. COUNCIL IS COMPOSED OF FOURTEEN MEMBERS - EIGHT ARE FROM AZAD KASHMIR INCLUDING STATE PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT, FIVE CHOSEN FROM PAK NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND AS CHAIRMAN, PAK PRIME MINISTER. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FEDERAL MINISTER ABDUL HAFIZ PIRZADA, THE MNAS NOMINATED BY BHUTTO, ARE A COLORLESS AND PEDESTRIAN LOT OF BACKBENCHERS WHO ARE NOT EXPECTED TO PLAY ANY MEANINGFUL ROLE IN COUNCIL'S DECISION-MAKING. THE NON-OFFICIAL AK MEMBERS APPEAR SIMILARLY UNIMPRESSIVE.

4. OPENING SESSION WAS ADDRESSED BY PRIME MINISTER AND THEN ADJOURNED AFTER FORMING TWO COMMITTEES, ONE TO PREPARE RULES OF PROCEDURE AND SECOND TO DECIDE WHICH FEDERAL LAWS WILL APPLY TO AZAD KASHMIR. IN SPEECH, BHUTTO STRUCK FAMILIAR THEME OF SETTLING KASHMIR DISPUTE ACCORDING TO UN RESOLUTIONS. HIS REASSERTION OF PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN KASHMIR WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A DISCLAIMER OF BELLICOSITY AND AN INSISTENCE THAT PAKISTAN STOOD FOR SANITY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE AFFAIRS OF SOUTH ASIA AND NORMALIZATION OF SUBCONTINENTAL RELATIONS. HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR REGULARIZING RELATIONS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AK. ALTHOUGH NEW ARRANGEMENT WAS AN INTERIM ONE, FACT IT WAS TO BE TEMPORARY PENDING FINAL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTE DID NOT MEAN IT SHOULD NOT ALSO BE DEMOCRATIC, RATHER THAN BUREAUCRATIC AS EARLIER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAK-AK CONNECTION HAD BEEN. HE PLEDGED MAXIMUM POSSIBLE ECONOMIC AID TO AK IN LINE WITH GOP'S POLICY OF PROVIDING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO BACKWARD AREAS IN PAKISTAN.

5. THE FORMATION OF COUNCIL IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE EXPANDING POLITICAL NEXUS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AK WHICH IS COMING TO REPLACE THE LONGSTANDING BUREAU-

CRATIC CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM OPERATED ON BEHALF OF  
THE GOP BY THE MINISTRY OF KASHMIR AFFAIRS. THE  
POLITICAL NATURE OF THE CONNECTION HAS BEEN UNDERSCORED  
BY THE EXPANDED ROLE OF PIRZADA, WHO AS A TRUSTED  
MEMBER OF THE BHUTTO COTERIE CAN BE COUNTED ON  
BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO PROVIDE DIRECTION TO THE  
KASHMIR POLITICAL LEADERS, PUT IN PLACE BY THE  
TAINTED MAY 1975 STATE ELECTION. (PIRZADA, RECENTLY  
NAMED MINISTER FOR KASHMIR AFFAIRS IN ADDITION TO  
HIS OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES, HAS ALSO BECOME THE CHAIR-  
MAN OF THE COUNCIL'S TWO COMMITTEES.) THE GROWING  
POLITICIZATION OF THE PAKISTAN-AK TIE, COMBINED WITH  
BHUTTO'S EMPHASIS ON REGULARIZING PAK-AK RELATIONS,  
IS ALSO FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE WILLINGNESS OF THE  
GOP TO TACITLY ACCEPT THE PRESENT DAY REALITIES OF  
THE KASHMIR DIVISION, HOWEVER MUCH IT MAY CONTINUE  
(AS BHUTTO HAS AGAIN ON THIS OCCASION) TO STRESS  
THAT ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT MUST BE ON THE BASIS OF  
SELF-DETERMINATION.  
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